

P3 Interns Can Help You Operate a “Greener” Restaurant or Food Service Business

Since 1997, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Partners in Pollution Prevention (P3) program has directed bright and creative engineering and science student interns to help businesses in the restaurant and food service industry reduce waste, conserve natural resources, save money and establish a reputation with customers for being a conscientious steward of the environment. Regardless of the size of your operation a P3 Intern can:

- visit your operations,
- point out areas that can be greener and save money,
- estimate the potential environmental and economic savings,
- do the legwork to find better equipment or supplies, and
- write it all down in a report detailing the benefits from implementing the recommended changes.

Examples of P3 Intern Work

Energy

- **conserve energy and reduce mercury by using alternative exit signs and light bulbs**



P3 helped a facility determine how many lights were needed, where to buy them and how much difference installation would make to the bottom line. Savings range from about **\$12/yr to \$42/yr** (80-120 kWh) for each fixture depending on size and amount of use.



- **save electricity by installing occupancy sensors or light switch reminders and using strategic thermostat management practices**



One occupancy sensor in a single public restroom at a local facility was found by the P3 intern to save **\$2,000 and 365 kWh per year** in electricity use and costs.



- **use alternative energy sources for heating/cooling**

One restaurant in Lincoln installed a geothermal heat pump for its facility. P3 interns have worked with drillers and installers to design a system and estimate its cost.

Water

- **reduce water use through xeriscaping or modifications to landscape irrigation systems**



A landscape irrigation audit at one popular Lincoln fast food establishment pointed out simple corrections and maintenance that can save over **\$2,500 and 600,000 gallons** of water per year.

- **reduce water use by installing energy efficient faucet and toilets/urinals**

Waterless urinals can save about **\$100/year** over traditional styles according to the research conducted by one P3 intern. Another intern found that automatic faucets can save about **\$600** in water costs per year.



- **save water, electricity and material/supplies by changing equipment/processes**



Finding the right supplier of pre-wash sprayers was estimated to save **36,500 gallons and \$300/year** in water costs for one business. Another project

identifies more water conserving floor cleaning equipment



Waste

- **reduce landfill impact by using biodegradable disposable utensils**

For one food service operation a P3 intern found a source of dishware and utensils that can result in reducing **250 pounds** solid waste that will remain in our landfills forever.



- **reduce solid waste by installing energy efficient hand dryers**

Using full cost accounting to the benefits for an efficient hand dryer includes the reduced maintenance and paper towel material and waste costs as well as energy use. A P3 intern estimated the payback period for one restroom to be **less than 1 year**.



- **eliminate exposure to hazardous chemicals by using green cleaning supplies**

A P3 intern found that by merely changing the type and concentration of their cleaning solution, one facility had the potential to **save \$14,200/year**.



Other Sustainable Practices

- **create more sustainable menus using food waste management calculator**



An EPA food waste calculator used by one intern can help a restaurant estimate more accurately their purchases and reduce waste.

- **engage employees and patrons in pollution prevention efforts and awareness**

Interns can develop a publicity campaign for reusable shopping bags or help establish a program to remind patrons of your commitment to the environment using advertising or table tents.



Getting Free Assistance

Although no two businesses are alike, our students have helped **78%** of the businesses assisted implement at least one of the recommendations made. In all **over 40%** of all the recommendations made by P3 interns have been implemented.

It is a **free service** to have a P3 intern tour your facility and identify ways for your operation can become more “green” and save money. Visit our Web site to see additional examples of our work and information about how to request technical assistance. Don’t hesitate to contact the program if we can be of assistance to you.

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